



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES
BUCHAREST · ROMANIA

U.S. Embassy Newsletter

Activities and events from across the US Mission in Bucharest

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR



Ambassador Nicholas F. Taubman

I recently had the honor to swear in 37 new Peace Corps Volunteers. I am constantly amazed at the stories of the individuals who join the Peace Corps. These are individuals who took the leap to turn their ideals into actions. As an American, I am very proud of their service to the United States and their dedication to strengthening mutual understanding with all Romanians. The Peace Corps is featured in the IN FOCUS section in this issue of the Newsletter.

The Peace Corps is emblematic of our deep, multi-faceted relationship with Romania and Romanians. We have much to celebrate in the growing ties between our two countries. From the opening of the new Emerson facility in Cluj-Napoca to the ribbon cutting at a newly renovated school in Constanta, we are working hard to build enduring institutional and personal linkages. These and other stories are featured in this edition of the Embassy Newsletter. As usual, feel free to share your thoughts on these activities at infobuch@state.gov.

Ambassador Taubman

EMBASSY HIGHLIGHTS



Ambassador Taubman presenting a speech at the Official Opening Ceremony of the Emerson Facility in Cluj-Napoca. April 15, 2008
(Photo: Emerson)

New Emerson facility is "a symbol of US contribution to Romania's economic development"

Ambassador Nicholas Taubman joined local political and business leaders in Cluj-Napoca on April 15 to celebrate the Grand Opening of Emerson's new engineering design and production facilities. The state-of-the-art complex, which will eventually employ more than 2,000 workers in four separate plants, will design and produce gas valves and regulator devices, electrical engines, generators, and power tools. The Ambassador congratulated Emerson for bringing such an impressive facility to Romania, and hailed the opening as symbolic of the dynamic contribution that American investment is making to Romania's economic development.

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Peace Corps Volunteers take

Thirty-seven sworn in as new Peace Corps Volunteers

In a ceremony held on May 5, 37 new Peace Corps Volunteers who will serve in Romania for the next two years were sworn in by Ambassador Taubman. The new Volunteers just completed 10 weeks of training in Ploiesti, where they studied Romanian language, history and culture and lived with Romanian host families. There are currently 135 volunteers working in 40 counties across the country. Since its beginning in 1991, over 850 Volunteers have supported 4 program sectors: Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Community Economic

the oath of allegiance at the swearing-in ceremony presided over by Ambassador Taubman. Bucharest, May 5, 2008 (Photo: L. Crusoveanu, U.S. Embassy)

Development, Institutional Development and Environmental Management and Education.

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A member of Colegiul National Mircea cel Batran shoots during the charity basketball game with the Seabees in Constanta. April 24, 2008 (Photo: Alina Savu, JTF-E)

Mixing it up on the court: For teenagers of Constanta and American Seabees game is about much more than the score

Students of the high school "Mircea cel Batran" in Constanta challenged the American Seabees of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 stationed at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base to a unique basketball game. To raise money to aid a sick colleague, the students sold tickets to the game and collected donations from the many Romanian and the American spectators who attended. "We thought that is a noble cause, a good thing if we can help someone. The soldiers were proud to be part of such event," said the Seabees' spokesperson Alina Savu. A Romanian player added, "We are not trying to see how good they (the Seabees) are at basketball but in their hearts and how much they wanted to play. And they were very good. We could have not done raised the money without them."

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eJournal USA: The Olympic Experience.

Romanian Olympian recalls her gold medal race in Sydney

"In a 5,000-meters race, it's only in the last 200 meters that you start to count your steps." As an Olympic competitor in 1996 and 2000, Romanian runner Gabriela Szabo won bronze, silver, and gold medals. In April 2008 eJournal USA, an electronic journal published by the US Department of State, she joined other Olympians in recalling important moments in their Olympic careers. For her it was her victory in the 5000-meter at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney and her hopes for other children to succeed in sports.

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Assistant Secretary for Homeland Security Dr. Richard C. Barth (Photo: dhs.gov)

Assistant Secretary for Homeland Security Visits Romania for Talks on Visa Waiver Program

On April 17 Dr. Richard C. Barth, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Policy Development in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security met with Minister of Interior and Administrative Reform Cristian David and other officials in his Ministry, as well as officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss Romania's progress towards meeting the criteria for inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program. Dr. Barth's visit is a part of the continuing dialogue between the U.S. and Romanian Governments about the Visa Waiver Program.

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Ambassador Taubman presents after the interview a gift to host Paul Grigoriu for his long career in radio. Bucharest, April 14 2008 (Photo: Ana-Maria Popa, U.S. Embassy)

Ambassador reviews the NATO Summit on national public radio

One week after the NATO Summit ended in Bucharest, Ambassador Taubman spoke about the importance of the Summit and commented on progress made in Romania in other areas. In a live interview with the national public radio, Radio Romania Actualitati, also pointed out some of the subjects discussed during the Summit - U.S. – Russia relations, the missile defense shield, and Kosovo issue. Radio Romania Actualitati is the second most popular radio station in the country and is the one station that can be heard in every village in the country. The interview was aired during daily program “Sfertul Academic” (Academic Quarter), the longest running show on the public radio.

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Students, Seabees, and Director Elena Teodorescu pass through the new fencing around Kindergarten 46 built by the Seabees as part of a school restoration project supported by the US Embassy. April 14, 2008 (Photo: SFC Juan C. Vasquez/NMCB 74)

“Good fences make good neighbors” - Seabees build friendships across fences

Contrary to poet Robert Frost’s Mending Wall, Seabees in Constanta have found that building a good fence has created a good friendship. On April 14, the Seabees from Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base and Kindergarten 46’s administrator cut a ribbon to symbolically inaugurate a renovation project, including a new fence and landscaping, designed to make the school in Constanta safer and more attractive. The reconstruction was made possible through funds from the US Embassy in Bucharest, the hard work of the Seabees, and the collaboration of the kindergarten staff. Kindergarten 46 Director Elena Teodorescu thanked to the Americans for their support. “We saw each other every day here and we became friends,” she said, referring to the relationship between the American Seabees, teachers and children.

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King Mihai unveils the portrait of Queen Anne in a ceremony held at Elisabeta Palace, on May 10, 2008, with the occasion of the Monarchy Day (Photo: Mihaela Dumitru Tranca and Gabriel Stamate)

Ambassador offers portraits of Romania’s King and Queen on Monarchy Day

On Saturday, May 10, Romania’s Royal House celebrated Monarchy Day at the Elisabeta Palace in Bucharest, in a ceremony that marked the unveiling of the portraits of King Mihai and Queen Anne, offered as personal gift by Ambassador and Mrs. Taubman. The portraits were painted by American artist Nelson Shanks in June 2007. In his speech, Ambassador Taubman spoke about the role played by King Michael in Romania’s history, his contribution to the Allies’ victory in World War II and his role in saving of Jews and Roma from the extermination camps in the 1940s.

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Lt. Gen. Constantin Croitoru Chief of Staff of the Romanian Air Force sits in the cockpit of an F-15 Strike Eagle while Capt. Mike Emerson 492 Expeditionary

U.S. Airmen augmented Romanian security for NATO summit

475 airmen from across U.S. Air Forces in Europe converged on locations throughout the continent to support Operation Noble Endeavor, a Romanian-led effort to police the sky above the NATO summit in Bucharest. Over 350 members of the U.S. 404 Air Expeditionary Group camped for almost a month at Air Base 71 in Luna (Campia Turzii), after building a temporary “tent city.” The U.S. Air Force augmented the security at Romania’s request. In addition to their air forces, the Romanians provided air traffic control, airspace expertise and command authority. “This is just one example in a long list of accomplishments of NATO nations working together toward a common purpose,” said Col. Peter Davidson, the 323rd AEW commander. “There is great strength in allied

Fighter Squadron briefs on the plane's instruments on March 29 before the NATO Summit in Bucharest.
(Photo: USAF Senior Airman Teresa M. Hawkins)

interoperability, and I'm proud to be a part of this mission."

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IN FOCUS



Peace Corps volunteers take their English language students outside the classroom for interactive lessons. (Photo: Peace Corps 2007)

Peace Corps Romania

"In the beginning I had no idea that working with a Peace Corps Volunteer can be so fulfilling. It made our village hall work better. It made us achieve more and it made our lives more interesting. I will always be grateful for such a colleague and friend." Cornel Popa, Mayor of Hasmas.

Peace Corps Romania began operations in 1991. There are currently 135 volunteers working in 40 counties across the country. Since 1991, over 850 Volunteers have supported 4 program sectors. Today, Peace Corps Romania programs work to assist Romania's development needs through sharing Volunteer skills and knowledge in four programs: Institutional Development, Community Economic Development, Environment, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

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